DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 210 412 UD 021 915

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TITLE Methodology for the Study of the Development of Racism.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (Denver, CO, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Measures; *Measurement Techniques; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; *Racial Attitudes; Research Methodology; Test Reliability; Test Validity
IDENTIFIERS Doll Choice Task; Preschool Racial Attitude Measure; Projective Prejudice Test (Katz); Sticker Family Game

ABSTRACT

The dearth and inadequacy of measurement instruments to assess racial attitudes in children of preschool age provided the impetus for an empirical study that examined four types of commonly used racial attitude measurement instruments and, at the same time, provided information on racial attitudes among preschoolers. Subjects of the study were 36 boys and girls aged 31 to 72 months from four preschools. Over a two week period, the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure II (PRAM II), the Doll Test, the Projective Prejudice Test, and the Sticker Test were administered to the subjects. A subsample of 10 children was retested after a month. Results indicated that each test had adequate reliability. The PRAM II and the Doll Test were found to be significantly correlated, but the correlations between the other measures were insignificant, indicating the multidimensionality of ethnic attitudes. Correlations between age of children and the PRAM II and the Doll Test were also significant. The findings further show that stereotypic ethnic attitudes are measurable at young ages and that there is increasing awareness of racial attitudes as children get older. In addition to reporting on the author's research, this report includes a review of currently available racial attitude measurement instruments for school age and preschool age children. (Author/MJL)

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ED210412

Methodology for the Study of the Development of Racism

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Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association, Denver, 1981.

UD021915

Abstract

Little empirical research has been done examining the adequacy and interrelatedness of racial attitude measures with pre-school populations. In the present study, four commonly used measures of racial attitudes, the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure, Doll Test, Projective Prejudice Test, and Sticker Test, were adapted for use with pre-schoolers and were administered to 36 pre-school children ranging in age from 31 to 72 months. Results indicated that each test had adequate reliability. A significant correlation obtained between two measures, the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure and the Projective Prejudice Test. Correlations between age of the children and the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure and the Doll Test were also significant. The children indicated increasing awareness of racial attitudes as they got older. Five-year-olds were significantly different from the younger children. The development of racial attitudes, implications for assessment of young children, and the multidimensional make-up of racial attitudes are discussed.

Assessment of Racial Awareness in Preschool Children

Research aimed at understanding the nature and etiology of racial prejudice has consistently pointed to the early years of life as a critical formative period. Evidence suggests that racial awareness is present as early as the third year and that prejudicial attitudes are formed by age five years (Blake & Dennis, 1943; Gregor & McPherson, 1966; Litcher & Johnson, 1969).

Despite this concensus, the field has generated relatively few instruments for assessing racial attitudes in children of school age, with a real dearth of creditable instruments for pre-school populations. In addition, there is typically a host of measurement problems and inadequacies associated with existing instruments. Test reliability is frequently not reported, effects of the testing situation and examiners are not looked at, single measures of racial attitudes are used despite the widely-held belief that racial prejudice is composed of multiple components, and the correlations between various assessment measures remain, with one exception (Katz, Sohn, & Zalk, 1975), unexamined and unreported (Katz, 1976). Katz et al. (1975) working with urban grade school children and multiple ethnic attitude measures (including the Katz-Zalk projective technique, a social distance scale, an intolerance questionnaire, and a dogmaticism scale) reported little overlap in grade school children's responses to the instruments, with a number of separate factors emerging. This state of affairs has made progress difficult in our understanding of the formation and nature of racism and rendered nearly impossible interpretation of modification efforts.

Instruments for School Age Children

A number of ethnic assessment strategies have been used with school age children including direct questionnaires (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1948; Gough, Harris, Martin & Edwards, 1950; Kutner, 1958); picture preference techniques (Horowitz & Horowitz, 1938; Morland, 1966; Radke & Sutherland, 1949), projective measures (Katz, 1973; Katz, Johnson, & Parker, 1970), social distance scales (Gough, et al., 1950; Koslin, Amarel, & Ames, 1969), behavioral measures (Koslin, Koslin, Pargament, & Waxman, 1972), and disguised measures (Horowitz & Horowitz, 1938; Stabler & Johnson, 1972).

Zalk and Katz (1976), for example, developed a projective measure intended for children in elementary school grades which consists of ambiguous interracial slides depicting actual photographs of children in common school situations, plus buffer items of same ethnicity slides with same- or cross-sexed groups of children. Dramatic scenes are used, ethnicity is not mentioned, and the subject is not asked for evaluative statements.

In addition, social distance scales were among the earliest used measures of ethnic attitudes and designate a particular minority, with subjects asked to indicate the degree of social intimacy they would desire with this minority population. A novel approach was taken by Koslin, et al. (1969) who measured actual distances from a fixed target to derive their results.

Instruments for Preschool Age Children

A much more limited selection of measurement devices is available as we turn to the present population of interest, the pre-school child. Clark and Clark (1947) offered children a choice between a black doll and a white doll with which positive or negative attributes were to be associated.

Porter (1971) offered a more complex doll task using stories. Williams (1971) and his colleagues at Wake Forest University developed the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure (PRAM). This consists of a series of 24 line drawings containing two children or adults. The child is asked to select a figure which best completes (through the attribution of a positive or negative evaluative adjective), a story. Adequate individual and group reliability is reported with the PRAM, and the revised PRAM II, which have been used in an impressive number of investigations.

It was the purpose of the present study to begin the process of remedying a number of these methodological inadequacies by examining four instruments measuring racial attitudes toward blacks and whites appropriate to, or adapted for, preschool age children.

The ethnic assessment instruments used in the present study were: (a) the PRAM II (Williams, 1971); (b) the Projective Prejudice Test (Zalk & Katz, 1976) modified for preschoolers; (c) Doll technique; and (d) a social distance scale using the Koslin et al. (1969) actual distance scoring. Results reported include test-retest reliabilities as well as intercorrelations between the four instruments.

Method

Subjects. The subjects were 36 white preschool children (25 males and 11 females) between the ages of 31 and 72 months ($\bar{M}$ = 53.69; SD 9.17). Subjects were recruited from four preschools based on permission slips signed by parents.

Measures

Preschool Racial Attitude Measure II (PRAM). The PRAM is composed of

24 drawings of paired black and white children (Williams, 1971). Each subject was asked to pick the one of the pair who is "ugly", "smart", etc. This measure has a reported internal consistency reliability of .80 and one-year test-retest reliability of .55.

Doll Test (DT). The DT consisted of a black and a white female doll or a black and a white male doll (Sasha Dolls) presented in a choice situation. The child was asked questions such as "Which is the bad girl/boy?", "Show me the doll that you would like to sit next to at school."

Projective Prejudice Test (PPT). The PPT is composed of 38 slides (this study used 20 of the 38 selected for simplicity of situation) of paired black and white children in various settings (Zalk & Katz, 1976). The children responded to a statement which accompanied each slide such as "Here are two boys. One of them is a friendly boy. He has a lot of friends. Which one is the friendly boy?" Split-half reliability for the PPT is reported to be .81.

Sticker Test (ST). The ST consisted of ten 8 x 11 pages with a stimulus figure in the upper right-hand corner (Koslin, et al., 1969). The stimulus figure might be a black or white boy, girl, mother, or father. There were two filler pages with a cat and a rag doll figure. The children were asked to place a sticker representing themselves anywhere on the page in relation to the figure. Distance from sticker to figure was measured. The total of distances to white figures was subtracted from distances to black figures to determine the score used in the analyses.

The four racial attitude measures were administered within a two week period by five trained examiners. To hold examiner effects constant for this study, only white females were used. Examiners were blind to the various

test results, which were scored by another assistant. Following a one-month period, a subsample of ten children was retested.

Results

Table 1 presents the Pearson Product-Moment Coefficients for the data. To examine developmental trends, the children were divided into equal groups according to age (Group 1, youngest, 31 to 51 months; Group 2, intermediate 52 to 59 months; Group 3, oldest, 60 to 72 months). Significant correlations occurred between age of subjects and prejudiced attitude on the PRAM and DT. As the children increased in age they gave more responses in a prejudiced direction on these two tests, particularly in the five-year-old group. Means on both these tests were above what might be expected if the children were randomly responding. Group 1 had a PPT mean of 15.2 and a DT mean of 11.7; Group 2, PPT 15.9, DT 11.9; Group 3, PPT 17.7, DT 14.3.

The only significant correlation between tests was between the PRAM and the PPT. Correlations between all other tests did not reach significance. The correlation between the PRAM and DT was significant at the .08 level.

One-month test-retest reliability on a randomly selected subsample of ten children was .63 for the PRAM, .77 for the PPT, .72 for the DT, and .71 for the ST.

Insert Table 1 here

Discussion

Our findings indicate that each of the four tests administered to our preschool age population showed adequate reliability (i.e., range .63-.77) and suggest that these instruments provide reliable downward extensions of

ethnic assessment measures to 3-5 year old children.

Our findings similarly evidence that stereotypic ethnic attitudes are measurable at such young ages. The PRAM and the Doll Test each clearly show means associated with pro-majority, anti-minority preferences, while the PPT indicates a slight bias in this direction. When broken down into age groups, the three- and four-year-olds show a slight bias in this direction and essentially do not differ in racial attitudes on either the PRAM or the DT. However, the five-year-olds show a significantly stronger pro-majority, anti-minority attitude on both tests. This supports the belief that racial attitudes are solidified by age five. While this was not the primary purpose of the present investigation, our results demonstrate consistent prejudicial attitudes on the part of pre-schoolers on three of the four measures specifically designed for this population. It is interesting to note that these results are quite consistent with those obtained when 3-5 year old white children were called to respond to similar instruments portraying Mexican-American and Anglo people. (Balch & Paulsen, in preparation).

Our findings also indicate that only two of the four instruments (i.e., PRAM and PPT) are significantly related to each other, with the remaining measures showing positive, but non-significant correlations. The one exception to this trend is the Sticker Test which currently is found to neither correlate with the remaining tests or discriminate on ethnic attitudes.

These above findings are taken as support of the multi-dimensionality of ethnic attitudes. It also serves as a warning of the dangers of trying to assess undimensionally, the effects of programs aimed at modifying ethnic attitudes.

Our findings are also construed to support the need for the earliest

possible prevention intervention when dealing with stereotypic and prejudicial ethnic attitudes. Our results would suggest impacting on three- and four-year olds. Research aimed at distilling the specific components of ethnic prejudice is needed, as is research geared towards understanding what interventions, with what age children and at which time, would be most potent.

Table 1

Pearson Product Moment Correlations

Variable	Mean/Total Possible	S.D.	PRAM	DT	PPT	ST
Age Group			.30*	.30*	.17	.20
PRAM	16.25/24	3.4		.24	.62**	.01
DT	12.61/18	3.6			.21	.14
PPT	11.17/20	3.2				-.03
ST	-.33	1.1				

* significant at .05 level

** significant at .001 level

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